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National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*

Tajikistan

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I. Methodology

1. This national report was prepared in the context of the second cycle of the universal periodic review by a working group comprising representatives of the Executive Office of the President, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Office of the Procurator-General, the State Committee on National Security, the Committee for Women and the Family, the Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of National Traditions, Celebrations and Rituals, and the Statistics Agency.

2. The report is based on the outcome of the National Plan for 2013-2015 to implement the recommendations made by Human Rights Council member States in connection with the country's universal periodic human rights review, which was approved pursuant to a presidential decision of 3 April 2013. A summary of the progress made in implementing the recommendations from the first cycle was prepared semi-annually and circulated to government agencies and civil society.

3. The preparation of the report involved broad public discussion. Six rounds of national consultations were held in April and May 2015, with financial support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Central Asia Regional Office and the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan, and, in November 2015, the draft national report was presented to representatives of the Government, the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), academics and civil society organizations.

4. The working group wishes to thank the civil society organizations for their cooperation in preparing the present report.

II. General overview, and reform of institutional mechanisms for the protection of human rights

Recommendations Nos. 88.3, 88.4, 88.5, 88.6 and 88.7

5. The Government Commission on Compliance with International Human Rights Obligations was established pursuant to a government decision of 4 March 2002. With a view to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council, a draft government decision on the expansion of the Commission's mandate was prepared and is under consideration. Pursuant to the decision, the mandate would provide for: channels of communication for soliciting information from government bodies; authority to examine the Views of the Human Rights Committee on individual communications and the work of expert groups preparing national reports; enhanced responsibility for developing national plans to implement the recommendations made by the United Nations treaty bodies, as well as procedures for monitoring such plans; and mechanisms for involving civil society in consultation processes and in the work of the Commission.

6. On 15 July 2015, the office on human rights safeguards was transformed into a department, and an office on the rights of the child was established within the Executive Office of the President. The new department's human resources were increased commensurate with this change. The department acts as the secretariat to the Government Commission on Compliance with International Human Rights Obligations.

7. With a view to the establishment of a children's ombudsman office, the Government approved a bill to amend the Commissioner for Human Rights Act, which has been adopted by the country's parliament.

8. On 28 March 2012, the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions accredited the Commissioner for Human Rights with "B" status. A working group has been set up under the Commissioner to implement the Sub-Committee's recommendations.

9. The Commissioner's activities are constantly being expanded. To support the Commissioner's work and the implementation of his mandate, an office comprising 21 civil servants and 15 support staff has been set up. Since 2012, local offices and public advice bureaux have been established in 11 regions, employing 18 staff.

10. To ensure that relevant national legislation is in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), the Government approved a bill to amend the Commissioner for Human Rights Act, which has been adopted by the parliament. The amendments concern the expansion of the Commissioner's mandate and coordinating role.

III. Cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms and civil society

Recommendations 88.1, 88.2 and 88.3

11. Over the reporting period, Tajikistan received visits from: the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Mr. Anand Grover (2012); the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Mr. Juan Méndez (2012 and 2014); the Special Rapporteur on disability, Mr. Shuaib Chalklen (2014); and the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Mr. Léo Heller (2015).

12. Between 2010 and 2015, Tajikistan submitted (presented) periodic reports to, and received recommendations from, the following committees: the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2010 and 2015); the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2013); the Committee against Torture (2012); the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2012); the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (2012); the Human Rights Committee (under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) (2013); and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (under the eponymous Covenant) (2015).

13. The Government gives serious attention to the recommendations of United Nations bodies. The following processes have been established for their implementation: (1) involvement of interdepartmental working groups and civil society representatives in the preparation of national plans; (2) preparation of national action plans; (3) systematic monitoring (semi-annually) of the progress made in implementing national action plans; and (4) drafting of semi-annual reports summarizing the information received in this regard from government agencies, which are translated into Russian and English and widely disseminated among those agencies and civil society, and also to the public through the media.

14. The following national action plans were developed in broad consultation with civil society institutions:

(a) The National Plan for 2013-2015 to implement the recommendations made by Human Rights Council member States in connection with the country's universal periodic human rights review (approved by presidential decision on 3 April 2013);

(b) The National Action Plan for 2013-2017 to implement the recommendations of the Committee on Migrant Workers (of 22 June 2013);

(c) The plan of action to prevent the use of torture, based on the recommendations of the Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on torture, Mr. Juan Méndez (of 15 August 2013);

(d) The plan of action in respect of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning the combined sixth to eighth periodic reports of Tajikistan, adopted by the Committee at its eighty-first session, held from 6 to 31 August 2012 (of 14 November 2013);

(e) The National Plan for 2014-2016 to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee on the second periodic report of Tajikistan on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (of 23 July 2014);

(f) The National Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concerning the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Tajikistan (of 23 July 2014);

(g) The National Action Plan to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013) (of 23 July 2014);

(h) The National Action Plan for 2015-2020 to implement the recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (of 22 October 2015).

15. Representatives of civil society are involved in the process of preparing national reports and implementing the recommendations made under the universal periodic review procedure and by the United Nations treaty bodies. Prior to their submission, the reports are the subject of broad discussion with civil society. The views of civil society are taken into account when national action plans to implement the treaty bodies' recommendations are drawn up.

IV. Normative framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, and ratification of the main human rights instruments

Recommendations 90.1, 90.2, 90.3, 90.4, 90.5, 90.6, 90.7, 90.8, 90.9, 90.10, 90.11, 90.12, 90.13, 90.14, 90.15, 90.16 and 90.17

16. National legislation on the protection of human rights is based on the main international instruments in that area. In the period from 1993 to January 2015, Tajikistan, as an international organization member, ratified more than 50 conventions and adopted various recommendations for incorporation in national legislation. It has accepted the main United Nations human rights texts. In 2014-2015, it ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

17. Currently, ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is under consideration. Interdepartmental working groups have been set up to study the legal, socioeconomic and financial implications for Tajikistan of becoming a party to these international instruments.

V. Institutional aspects with respect to the promotion and protection of human rights

A. Right to life and abolition of the death penalty

Recommendations 90.19, 90.20, 90.21, 90.22, 90.23, 90.24, 90.25, 90.26 and 90.27

18. Pursuant to the Suspension of the Death Penalty Act of 15 July 2004, a moratorium on capital punishment is in place.

19. Measures are being taken with a view to the abolition of the death penalty. An interdepartmental working group is considering various options and procedures with respect to abolition, as well as conducting appropriate public information and education campaigns. Conferences have been organized and held on a regular basis, along with more than 60 awareness-raising meetings for members of the public in the Republic's towns and districts. In addition, the working group has analysed the crime situation before and after the introduction of the moratorium on the death penalty. At present, two options for the abolition of the death penalty are being considered: complete abolition by means of a constitutional amendment, and abolition without such an amendment, retaining the possibility of applying capital punishment in time of war.

B. Freedom from torture

Recommendations 88.23, 88.24, 88.25, 88.26, 88.27, 88.28, 88.48, 89.1, 90.34, 90.35 and 90.36

20. In order to implement the recommendations made under the universal periodic review procedure and by the Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on torture, a plan of action to prevent the use of torture, based on the recommendations of the Committee and the Special Rapporteur, was developed and approved (2013).

21. In 2012, article 143-1 (torture) was incorporated into the Criminal Code. The definition of torture in the article corresponds to that contained in the Convention against Torture. Since 2012, four criminal cases have been brought under the article, and four officials have been convicted. In June 2012, the plenum of the Supreme Court adopted a decision on the application of provisions of criminal law and criminal procedure law to prevent the use of torture.

22. In 2013, the Office of the Procurator-General developed and issued a theoretical and practical manual for procurators entitled "Principles of law and organization of the work of the procuratorial authorities with respect to the prevention, detection and investigation of torture". On 24 October 2012, an Instruction on detention was approved pursuant to a joint order of the Procurator-General and the heads of the other law enforcement agencies. The Instruction provides for detainees' rights to be explained to them at the location of their actual arrest; for them to have prompt access to counsel; for detailed information about the arrest (including the surname and position of all the persons involved) to be recorded, and

for counsel and detainees themselves to have access to the record; for detainees to undergo a medical examination; and for the relatives of detainees to be notified of their arrest and of any transfer to another place of detention.

23. With a view to the introduction of a special system for recording reports and complaints about the use of torture, the Procurator-General, on 31 January 2014, adopted a directive on additional measures to strengthen procuratorial oversight in the field of human rights and ensure the impartial and thorough examination of communications from citizens, in particular in the course of initial inquiries and investigations into criminal offences.

24. A bill to amend the Criminal Code so that it provides for harsher penalties for the use of torture has been prepared and submitted to ministries and departments for coordination.

25. A bill to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure is currently at the coordination stage, along with a bill on the procedures and conditions for the custody of suspects, accused persons and defendants. These bills define the moment of actual arrest and provide for the right to have access to defence counsel from that moment and the right to hold meetings with counsel unhindered, including prior to questioning. Evidence obtained through the use of torture, cruel treatment, violence, threats, deception or other unlawful acts is declared inadmissible. Information indicating that torture or cruel treatment has been used against suspects, accused persons or defendants is verified and evaluated to determine whether their statements can be admitted as evidence, irrespective of whether a report has been filed by the individual concerned or a petition lodged by his or her counsel. Evidence declared inadmissible is considered invalid and may not be used as the basis for a charge. When a person is detained on suspicion of having committed an offence, an officer of the criminal prosecution agency or other competent person at the location of the actual arrest must notify the person orally of the offence he or she is suspected of having committed; explain that the person has the right to make a telephone call or send a message to a lawyer or close relative and to have the assistance of defence counsel; and inform the person that he or she has the right to remain silent and that any statement he or she does make may be used in evidence against him or her in criminal proceedings. After being admitted to a temporary holding facility, the suspect undergoes an examination by a medical officer to ascertain his or her general state of health and check for the presence of any bodily injuries. The detainee or his or her defence counsel has the right to request that the medical examination be conducted by an independent doctor or forensic expert. The findings of the medical examination are attached to the record of arrest.

26. A working group has been established to study experience and develop a plan of action for the creation of an independent forensic science institute and to look into the possibility of preparing and adopting a law on independent forensic investigations.

27. Training seminars are being conducted to study the feasibility of establishing an independent mechanism for the investigation of torture under the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol). Pursuant to the Istanbul Protocol, procedural documents have been prepared for use when cases of torture are identified. The text of the Protocol has been translated into Tajik and distributed to law enforcement and forensic science agencies.

28. In December 2012, on the initiative of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, a working group was set up, comprising representatives of NGOs, to promote the application of the provisions of the Istanbul Protocol by forensic experts when compiling internal documents. In November 2014, the Ministry approved three documents: a forensic examination form; an expert findings form; and a detainee medical examination report form. Draft guidance on the conduct of comprehensive forensic investigations in torture

cases and on the procedural and organizational framework for forensic investigations is being devised. On 2 June 2015, the Ministry adopted an order on the conduct of investigations by forensic commissions in cases of violent death in places of deprivation of liberty and other complex cases.

29. In November 2014, amendments were made to the Code of Criminal Procedure requiring extradition to be refused where there is information that the person whose extradition is sought may be subjected to torture in the requesting State.

30. The Executive Office of the President, together with the Office of the Procurator-General and the Commissioner for Human Rights, and with the direct participation of OHCHR representatives in Tajikistan, have conducted more than 100 seminars and training sessions on torture prevention in the regions in order to enhance the professional skills of law enforcement officers. Training seminars on international standards with respect to combating torture are held regularly in prisons, with the involvement of NGOs.

31. A training programme for judges on the theme of torture has been devised and is now being offered. The programme covers, inter alia, the decision of the plenum of the Supreme Court on the application of provisions of criminal law and criminal procedure law to prevent the use of torture, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Convention against Torture. A theoretical and practical manual entitled "Principles of law and organization of the work of the procuratorial authorities with respect to the prevention, detection and investigation of torture" has been developed. The manual contains commentaries on the national and international torture prevention mechanisms and on effective means and methods of identifying and investigating torture.

32. A State programme for 2013-2016 to ensure the safety of parties to criminal proceedings was approved pursuant to a government decision of 2 November 2012 with a view to the development of effective mechanisms for the application of the Act on State Protection of Parties to Criminal Proceedings. The programme provides for a mechanism to comprehensively regulate such protection.

33. The issue of reparation for moral and material harm suffered by victims of torture is addressed in detail in the Civil Code, including in articles 15 and 171, and in chapter 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Furthermore, the decision on the application of provisions of criminal law and criminal procedure law to prevent the use of torture, adopted by the plenum of the Supreme Court on 25 June 2012, explains to judges the penalties imposable for such material and moral harm and the procedure for lodging complaints of torture. In 2014-2015, the courts awarded compensation for moral harm in four cases involving the use of torture and other cruel treatment.

34. The possibility of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture is being studied. There is a need for further analysis of that issue and of the question of establishing an independent preventive mechanism, taking into account the experience of States that have become parties to the instrument.

35. For the purpose of preventing torture and ensuring an effective system of regular preventive visits to places of deprivation or restriction of liberty, a monitoring team has been established under the Commissioner for Human Rights comprising representatives of the Commissioner and members of the NGO Coalition against Torture in Tajikistan. In 2014-2015, the team conducted monitoring at 19 places of deprivation or restriction of liberty and 5 military units and enlistment centres.

C. Justice

Recommendations 88.44, 88.45, 90.29, 90.30, 90.32, 90.37

36. In 2015, the Judicial Reform Programme for 2015-2017, which covers the third phase of this reform, was approved by presidential decree.

37. An interdepartmental working group has been set up to analyse the relevant legislation and look into the development of a plan of action to expand the membership and mandate of the Council of Justice, with a view to making it more independent and strengthening its role in the judicial system; that would be achieved, inter alia, by moving the Council from within the executive branch of government to the judicial branch. The working group is also reviewing the procedures and criteria for selecting applicants for posts of judge. The Constitutional Act on the Courts of 26 July 2014 sets out in detail the safeguards with respect to the protection of judges during their term of office; these safeguards, which are in line with relevant international legal instruments, include guarantees of the independence and security of judges; liability for contempt of court, disrespect for judges and infringements of judicial inviolability; and a prohibition on interference in the activities of judges.

38. On 18 November 2013, the plenum of the Supreme Court adopted a decision on the application by the courts of the international legal instruments recognized by Tajikistan, which stipulates the procedures whereby courts should apply such instruments in judicial proceedings. In 2015, the Council of Justice Judicial Training Centre conducted educational programmes devoted to the international conventions and the feasibility of the practical application in judicial proceedings of the international standards recognized by Tajikistan.

39. Bills prepared to amend existing legislation define the moment of actual arrest; stipulate that the time and place of arrest, the grounds for the arrest and the surname of the officials involved must be entered in the detainee register, and that the detainee must be informed promptly of his or her right to the assistance of a lawyer and to a medical examination; and provide for the reduction of the 12-hour period within which the relatives of a detained person must be notified of his or her whereabouts and of any transfer to another place of detention.

40. A Code of Administrative Procedure has been adopted, and amendments have been made to the Code of Administrative Offences stipulating the procedure for challenging administrative detention.

41. To ensure justice for juveniles, provide comprehensive safeguards with respect to their rights and interests, ensure their comfort during initial inquiries and investigations and when administrative and criminal cases are heard in court, appoint serving judges to specialize in juvenile cases and refine relevant legislation, the National Action Plan for Juvenile Justice Reform was carried out between 2010 and 2015, and the Judicial Reform Programme for 2015-2017 is currently being implemented. The membership of a working group to draft a national action plan on juvenile justice for 2017-2021 has been confirmed and includes representatives of ministries and departments, the Commissioner for Human Rights and civil society.

D. Strengthening the capacity of prisons

Recommendations 88.46, 88.47, 88.49, 90.31, 90.33 and 90.34

42. Pursuant to the country's obligations in the field of human rights, a great deal of work has been done to bring places of deprivation of liberty into line with international standards. Amendments have been made to the Penalties Enforcement Code concerning

monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty by the Commissioner for Human Rights. The Commissioner and his representatives conduct visits to inspect the activities of those facilities and the conditions in which convicted persons are held and also to investigate statements and complaints filed by inmates.

43. The penal correction authorities have signed agreements with more than 12 international organizations and NGOs. Efforts to improve living conditions, cultural facilities, sanitation, hygiene and medical services are continuing. The following organizations work in cooperation with the authorities and have access to places of deprivation of liberty: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the AIDS Foundation East-West; the Tajikistan office of the Fondation Caritas Luxembourg; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Central Asia regional office; DVV International in Tajikistan; and Vita, Sino, Hayoti nav, Dina and other NGOs.

44. In order to improve the procedures for the enforcement of penalties and the conditions of custody for detainees, a draft policy for the reform of the penal correction system for the period up to 2025 has been prepared. The draft policy provides, inter alia, for the construction of temporary holding facilities and new correctional institutions; the furnishing of penal institutions with equipment and technology that meet modern needs; the harmonization of relevant legislation with the international instruments recognized by Tajikistan; the enhancement of conditions for the provision of psychological services to convicts; the development of production and greater involvement of convicts in punitive work; improvements to cells; and the use of alternative penalties.

45. Funding for penal institutions in 2015 was almost double that in 2010. The Government adopted a programme for the organization of labour and the development of industrial production in correctional institutions for 2015-2020, aimed at creating jobs for convicts and boosting production in such institutions. This programme is being financed from the State budget and through loans and grants.

46. In 2014-2015, in order to upgrade the professional skills of prison system staff, courses were held covering international standards and national mechanisms in relation to convicted persons. The Further Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice ran three extended courses for 30 officers from penal institutions. In addition, in cooperation with the AIDS Foundation East-West, awareness-raising seminars were conducted — eight in 2014 and five in 2015 — for prison system staff. In 2015, training sessions were held to instruct health workers in the cities of Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tyube and Khujand on the thorough medical documentation of evidence of the use of torture. Training exercises were carried out at eight prisons, involving all the staff of those institutions. The participants received instruction on international legal standards including the Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (Bangkok Rules), the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules) and the Istanbul rules.

47. The main standards contained in the Bangkok Rules are incorporated in the Penalties Enforcement Code. The action plan for prisons for 2013-2014 provided for training activities for staff at women's correctional institutions to increase their professional competence in dealing with women prisoners; these activities have been phased in. State funding to improve the detention conditions of women prisoners, in line with the Bangkok Rules, is gradually being augmented.

48. To harmonize Tajik legislation with these Rules and with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, a bill on the amendment of the Penalties Enforcement Code has been prepared and is currently at the coordination stage.

E. Combating trafficking in persons

Recommendations 88.36, 88.37, 88.38, 88.39, 88.40, 88.41 and 88.42

49. In order to intensify the fight against trafficking in persons, a Comprehensive Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons for 2014-2016 has been approved and the legislative framework in this area is being refined. On 14 June 2014, the Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Act was adopted. A working group has been established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, comprising representatives of relevant ministries and departments. to prepare draft regulations on the Centre to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Comprehensive Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons for 2011-2013 was approved pursuant to a government decision of 3 March 2011 and has been successfully implemented. At present, a supplementary action plan to strengthen efforts to combat trafficking in persons is being carried out with the aim of eradicating the worst forms of child labour and affording assistance to trafficking victims. In 2012, the Government approved the National Social Development Programme for Youth, in accordance with which funding is being earmarked to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

50. Between 2013 and 2015, the country's legislative bodies made amendments to the criminal law currently in force in Tajikistan with a view to strengthening the role and expanding the powers of the law enforcement agencies in tackling trafficking in persons, in particular to articles 130.2 (use of slave labour), 241.1 (production and distribution of pornographic materials or items depicting minors) and 241.2 (use of minors to produce pornographic materials or items) of the Criminal Code of 14 March 2014.

51. Between 2010 and the third quarter of 2015, 60 offences under article 130.1 (trafficking in persons) of the Criminal Code and 85 offences under article 167 (trafficking in minors) were recorded; the victims were mainly women and girls. All the offences were investigated, and the perpetrators were prosecuted.

52. Pursuant to the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Tajikistan and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), trafficking victims are referred to crisis centres with a view to their return. The Ministry of Internal Affairs identified 16 trafficking victims and, with the help of the IOM centre for children and support to trafficking victims in Tajikistan, returned 6 of them from the city of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. They were transferred to the centre to receive rehabilitative care.

F. Tackling the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs

Recommendation 88.43

53. With a view to the refinement of the legal and regulatory framework on drug control, various bills and draft decisions and decrees have been prepared and coordinated and are now pending approval before the relevant bodies, including a bill on compulsory treatment for alcoholics and drug addicts; a draft strategy of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for the period up to 2025; a draft policy on cooperation among the financial intelligence agencies of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); a draft agreement between the Government of Tajikistan and the Government of Latvia on cooperation in combating terrorism, organized crime and the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, and other offences; a draft

presidential decree to amend Presidential Decree No. 470 of 5 June 2008; a bill to amend the Electronic Communications Act; a bill to amend the Code of Administrative Offences; and a draft presidential decree to amend Presidential Decree No. 156 of 30 January 2007. In addition, a redrafted bill on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors has been prepared and is at the coordination stage, along with a bill on the Drug Control Agency reporting to the President.

54. In order to develop and strengthen regional cooperation in combating the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, the Agreement between the Drug Control Agency reporting to the President of Tajikistan and the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation was signed on 18 April 2015; the Agreement covers efforts to combat the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors.

55. For the purpose of expanding cooperation with neighbouring States and thus intensifying the fight against the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, a regular meeting — the sixteenth — of the coordinating council of heads of bodies of CSTO member States responsible for combating the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs was held in Dushanbe on 26 May 2015, with the participation of the head of the anti-drug department of Afghanistan and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

56. A high-level international conference on regional anti-drug cooperation took place on 27 May 2015. At the conference, a joint declaration on strengthening international cooperation in combating the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and developing consolidated proposals in that regard was adopted for discussion at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, to be held in 2016.

57. To upgrade the skills of law enforcement officers in combating the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, a number of training sessions and courses have been conducted. Law enforcement officers have taken an active part in training sessions organized by international organizations (UNODC and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)) and by the training institutes of national and foreign law enforcement agencies on such topics as inspecting containers for narcotic drugs, combating organized criminal drug gangs and smugglers, and guaranteeing border security.

G. The rights of women, gender equality and domestic violence prevention

Recommendations 88.10, 88.13, 88.14, 88.15, 88.16, 88.17, 88.18, 88.19, 88.20, 88.21, 88.22, 88.29, 88.30, 88.31, 88.32, 88.33, 88.34, 88.35 and 88.64

58. A National Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was adopted on 23 July 2014.

59. On 19 March 2013, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act was passed and, on 3 May 2014, a government decision approving the Domestic Violence Prevention Programme for 2014-2023 was adopted. These texts were published and distributed to the public at large. With the support of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan, a set of commentaries on the Domestic Violence Prevention Act was issued.

60. International experience of appointing women to leadership positions is being studied in order to gain familiarity with practice in that area. When selecting and assigning female personnel, ministries, departments and local State agencies mainly apply such criteria as experience and performance. Efforts to appoint women to leadership positions, in implementation of the Presidential Decree of 3 December 1999 on measures to enhance women's role in society, are bearing fruit.

61. According to a statistical analysis of the civil service, in the first quarter of 2015, there were 18,582 civil servants, of whom 4,414 (23.7 per cent) were women, 21 more than

in the previous year. Of the 5,561 senior staff supporting political and higher-level positions (first to fourth categories), 1,109 (20 per cent) were women. The number of women occupying such positions was 75 in 2007 but had reached 106 as at 1 April 2015. Women are employed mainly in central government agencies and structures that report to them. Currently, women constitute 47.4 per cent of staff of the Majlis-i Namoyandagon, the lower house of the parliament; in the Civil Service Agency, they make up 47.6 per cent of staff; in the Statistics Agency, 41.1 per cent; in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, 34.8 per cent; in the Ministry of Culture, 35.1 per cent; in the Committee on Language and Terminology, 33.3 per cent; in the Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting, 42.3 per cent; in the Communication Service, 38.7 per cent; in the Social Security and Pensions Agency, 40.3 per cent; in the Central Archive Department, 60 per cent; and in the Central Geology Department, 41.6 per cent.

62. On 1 November 2014, the Government adopted a decision on the reform of the Committee for Women and the Family, which reports to it. Pursuant to the decision, the number of posts in the Committee's central administration was increased by 7 and in its local offices by 105, and, on 1 January 2015, a legal office was established, along with an expert council to analyse legislation from a gender perspective. The council evaluates bills before their submission to the Government and the parliament.

63. As part of efforts to raise awareness among rural women and girls, through public information and education campaigns, of their right to access justice and education and their right to use of the land, the Republic's courts have held 759 review meetings on causes and factors that can give rise to crime and civil disputes or lead to court judgements being overturned or revised. Some 830 suggestions for preventing the recurrence of similar situations have been submitted to the relevant bodies; 10,014 presentations have been made during meetings with the public and on national and local television and radio stations, and 1,169 articles have appeared in the press.

64. The Committee for Women and the Family, together with an NGO, the League of Women Jurists, is carrying out a project entitled "Gender, entrepreneurialism and the market", which is aimed at increasing economic opportunities for women in communities in the city of Kulyab and in Vakhsh, Muminabod, Vose and Farkhor districts. The action plan to realize the project envisages the design and implementation of measures in the following areas: provision of legal assistance to women for the organization of private farms; documentation; climate change and adaptation; and awarding of grants for entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, within the framework of the project, advice centres have been established in the aforementioned regions, where rural women can seek counsel on the protection of their rights and interests and their access to the land.

65. To ensure that civil servants contribute more actively to efforts to raise gender awareness and address gender equality issues in the family and society, various activities are being carried out at all levels of government through the skills upgrading system for the civil service and similar programmes for ministries and departments. In the last five months of 2015 alone, 11 courses were created at the Presidential Institute for Public Administration, including 1 refresher training and 10 further training courses, which have been attended by 462 civil servants, including 233 women (50.6 per cent of attendees). The courses cover the following themes: "Legal framework for the civil service in Tajikistan"; "Women leaders"; "Application of the national and international legal and regulatory framework on the rights of the child"; and "Gender-based approaches to safeguarding human rights in the civil service".

H. Rights of the child and eradication of child labour

Recommendations 88.12, 88.13, 88.50, 88.53, 88.54, 89.2, 89.3, 89.4, 90.28, 90.48 and 90.49

66. The National Plan of Action for Children was carried out from 2003 to 2010 in order to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the initial report of Tajikistan and to fulfil the country's international obligations with respect to the protection of children's rights and interests.

67. Registration of the birth of a child is free of charge in Tajikistan. In accordance with article 5 of the Stamp Duty Act, citizens are entirely exempted from payment of stamp duty in connection with the registration of births and issuance of birth certificates.

68. An office on the rights of the child was established within the Executive Office of the President on 15 July 2015 and now acts as the secretariat to the Government Commission on the Rights of the Child. In addition, a children's rights office was set up within the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in 2012. The office employs three staff, one of whom deals with juvenile justice issues. A juvenile justice department was established within the Ministry of Justice in 2011 and, in 2012, became the department for juvenile justice and children's rights.

69. An appropriate legal framework is in place for tackling forced labour. The Constitution in article 35, the Labour Code, the Education Act and the Act on Parental Responsibility for the Instruction and Education of Children prohibit the engagement of children in forced labour. In addition, pursuant to a presidential order of 12 September 2006, the employment of children in cotton harvesting has been outlawed. The National Programme for 2015-2020 to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Tajikistan was approved pursuant to a presidential decision of 31 October 2014. It is based on article 6 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which was ratified by Tajikistan in 2005. The Programme provides for social protection for families with children who are engaged in the worst forms of child labour or are in the at-risk group. It also provides for easier access by parents of children who are at risk of being recruited to work in difficult conditions. On 14 March 2014, amendments were made to article 130 (2) of the Criminal Code incorporating a definition of "forced labour" and specifying penalties for its use.

70. Every year, the State service overseeing labour, migration and employment, together with the procuratorial authorities, the tax inspectorate, the Government Commission on the Rights of the Child and civil society organizations, carries out inspections aimed at eliminating the informal employment of minors.

71. As part of his work, the Commissioner for Human Rights periodically conducts public information campaigns. In 2012, the Commissioner, in cooperation with civil society, carried out monitoring in eight of the Republic's regions to assess respect in the juvenile justice system for the right of minors to freedom from torture and cruel treatment. This monitoring covered children who had previously been in conflict with the law. In 2014, the use of violence against children in five closed and semi-open institutions was monitored. In addition, in 2012-2015, monitoring was undertaken in 23 reform schools to evaluate the observance of the rights and freedoms of children as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

72. Dialogue on the fight against trafficking in persons takes place on a regular basis with the participation of social partners, namely, diplomatic missions of foreign States, international organizations and the Interdepartmental Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons. In 2013, in order to upgrade the professional skills of officers at

penal institutions (women's colonies) and reform schools (children's colonies), the Commissioner for Human Rights conducted training sessions on international standards and national legislation on the rights of children and women deprived of liberty.

73. Staff of the Commissioner's office have held a number of meetings on issues relating to the rights and freedoms of children, the prohibition on corporal punishment of children and ways of guaranteeing children's access to education and safe drinking water, and on international standards in those areas. The meetings were organized and took place in the following towns and districts of Sughd province: in Khujand, Chkalovsk, Kanibadam, Bobojon Gafurov, Isfara and Istaravshan. The deputy chairpersons of the towns and districts and the heads of the departments of women's affairs, education, health, social protection and internal affairs took part, along with civil society representatives, residential school principals and their charges.

74. On 18 March 2015, the Protection of Children's Rights Act was passed. The Act contains an explicit prohibition on the employment of children in heavy, underground work and in harmful working conditions. Tajik legislation explicitly prohibits child labour and corporal punishment of children in any circumstances, including in the home and at school. In addition, amendments have been made to article 174 (non-fulfilment of duties with respect to the upbringing of a minor) of the Criminal Code, under which failure to fulfil or to properly fulfil duties with respect to the upbringing of a minor by a parent or other person entrusted by law with those duties, or by a teacher or other employee of an educational establishment or reform school, if accompanied by cruel treatment of the minor, is a criminal offence.

I. Rights of persons with disabilities

Recommendation 90.18

75. An interdepartmental working group has been set up to undertake a survey of legislation and revise it; consider the feasibility of accession to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; conduct an awareness-raising campaign aimed at overcoming stigmatization; and study the possibility of adopting new criteria for the definition of disability that are in line with international standards.

J. Health

Recommendations 88.65, 88.66 and 88.67

76. The situation with respect to the supply of safe drinking water through central networks is improving thanks to the implementation of State programmes and strategies for the fulfilment of the country's obligations under the Millennium Development Goals. The rate of access to safe drinking water in 2015 stood at 55.6 per cent of the population, that is 4,667,500 persons. To meet their needs, the remainder of the population (44.4 per cent) used various sources, including irrigation channels and ditches (18.6 per cent), natural sources (9.1 per cent), rivers and streams (6.8 per cent), open wells (1.9 per cent), hand pumps (3.8 per cent), transported water (2.5 per cent), straight wells (1.9 per cent) and rainwater (0.2 per cent). Of the urban population, 94.5 per cent had access to safe drinking water; for the rural population, the figure was 42.1 per cent. Drinking water is provided through 742 central supply networks, including 105 communal and 637 departmental networks.

77. Between 2007 and 2015, 341.15 million somoni were spent to implement the Drinking Water Supply Programme for 2007-2020, or 90.9 per cent of programme funding.

In addition, in the context of ongoing projects, US $80.4 million has been spent on the construction and restoration of water supply systems and the improvement of sanitation.

78. The average HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the country is 0.1 per cent, which is 1.1 per cent lower than the global rate. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) rankings, Tajikistan is located in a high-prevalence area. On 30 October 2010, the Government adopted the Programme to Tackle the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Tajikistan for 2011-2015, which has been successfully implemented. The statute of the Coordinating Committee to Prevent and Combat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Tajikistan was approved by government decision. The Programme having been completed, it has been decided to prepare and submit a new programme.

79. To date, 40 centres have been established to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS. All newly-established centres are furnished with modern equipment, including a computer and printer, tables and chairs, prophylactic and diagnostic preparations and materials, enzyme immunoassay equipment and so forth. To ensure that HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services are accessible, 24 enzyme immunoassay laboratories and 4 CD4-count laboratories have been set up and 40 ambulances have been provided for the centres. In addition, 5 special clinics have been established at infectious diseases hospitals for persons living with HIV and are being supplied with the necessary equipment and drugs in a timely fashion.

80. On 24 and 25 February 2015 in Geneva, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, at its fifty-fourth session, considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Tajikistan on the implementation of the eponymous International Covenant. The Committee, at its 20th meeting, held on 6 March 2015, presented its recommendations in connection with the report's consideration. A National Action Plan for 2015-2020 to implement these recommendations has now been adopted.

K. Right to social protection and poverty eradication

Recommendations 88.60, 88.61, 88.62, 88.63 and 90.50

81. In order to lay the foundations for sustainable economic development, a National Development Strategy for the period up to 2015 has been devised, along with medium-term poverty reduction strategies; these documents have been adopted by the Government. The first phase of the poverty reduction strategy was to be implemented during the period 2007-2009. The subsequent, 2013-2015 phase was entitled Strategy to Improve the Well-being of the Population for 2013-2015. The final phase of the strategy first addressed such important social issues as impact and problem-solving approaches.

82. Thanks to the measures taken, the poverty rate in the country fell from 81 per cent in 1999 to 31 per cent in 2015. The reduction in the poverty rate is primarily the result of economic development and macroeconomic and social stability. It is planned to cut the rate to 20 per cent by 2020.

83. All economic and social development policies, strategies, programmes and plans are based on the National Development Strategy for the period up to 2015 and the Strategy to Improve the Well-being of the Population for 2013-2015. In order to improve living conditions and promote the attainment of national goals and priorities, more than 47 urban and rural development programmes have been developed and carried out.

84. To enhance living standards, a national development strategy for the period up to 2030 is being devised. The draft is under discussion by the public and experts.

L. Protection of the rights of migrants

Recommendations 88.67, 88.68 and 88.69

85. The National Action Plan for 2013-2017 to implement the recommendations of the Committee on Migrant Workers was adopted in order to ensure the coordination of actions to promote the civil, political and social rights of migrant workers and is now being carried out.

86. Guidelines on the procedures of the central administration of the Migration Service under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment were approved on 25 September 2014 to regulate the consideration of complaints lodged by migrant workers and members of their families.

87. To strengthen cooperation between the Migration Service and the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, on 10 October 2013 a memorandum of understanding was signed covering cooperation in protecting the rights and interests of Tajik migrant workers and members of their families during their time abroad, including migrant workers convicted of offences.

88. In 2015, 112,183 persons made applications to the Migration Service and the structures that report to it, 100,601 orally, 2,794 in writing and 8,788 by telephone. Of those persons, 10,165 were women. During checks prior to departure by aircraft for the Russian Federation, 36,292 Tajik nationals were discovered to be on the list of persons banned from entering the territory of that country. The applicants to the Migration Service were mainly seeking clarification of the reasons for their deportation from the Russian Federation, explanations of host country legislation or procedures for acquiring licences in the Russian Federation, replacement of lost documents, assistance with the return of relatives to Tajikistan and so forth. The list of persons banned from entering the territory of the Russian Federation was sent to all the structures reporting to the Migration Service, allowing Tajik nationals to undergo pre-departure screening. Tajik migrant workers whose rights and interests are violated may contact the central administration of the Migration Service or the Tajik mission in the Russian Federation using a telephone helpline.

89. Information is disseminated via the media on the procedure for the consideration of applications by members of the public.

90. Coordination of the activities of government agencies and international, civil society and other organizations with respect to the collection and analysis of statistical data on migrant workers has been improved. Every six months, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment reports to the Government on the progress made in implementing the National Strategy on Tajik Labour Migration for 2011-2015.

91. A new strategy for the period 2016-2020 has been prepared and submitted for review by the Government.

92. To ensure that migrant workers have access to necessary information, advice bureaux and departments are in operation within the central administration of the Migration Service and its branches in the provinces and in the city of Dushanbe. Following changes to the legislation of the Russian Federation on labour migration, over 100,000 information booklets were printed in Russian and Tajik and distributed to the population in the regions. The main issues relating to labour migration are explained on television and radio, by means of informational spots and discussions, and in newspapers and magazines, including online. State-run centres have been established in the cities of Dushanbe, Khorog, Khujand and Kurgan-Tyube to advise migrant workers and prepare them for departure. A State-run agency ensures that migrant workers have employment abroad. The agency has concluded a cooperation agreement with enterprises and institutions of the Russian Federation and

Kazakhstan on issues relating to the organized recruitment of migrant workers. The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment is implementing a plan of action for the award of certificates of Russian language proficiency and knowledge of the history and legal foundations of the Russian Federation.

93. The implementation of the National Strategy on Tajik Labour Migration for 2011-2015 is intended to address priority economic and social issues such as employment, social insurance, labour migration, pensions and social assistance.

M. Freedom of conscience

Recommendations 88.52, 90.43, 90.44, 90.45, 90.46 and 90.47

94. For the purposes of safeguarding freedom of religion, ensuring tolerance and fighting all forms of discrimination against persons belonging to religious minorities, awareness-raising and cultural events, along with training seminars, have been held for the public and members of the clergy to explain the provisions of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations Act, the Traditions, Celebrations and Rituals Regulation Act and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act. In cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church in the City of Dushanbe, an international theoretical conference on the theme "Christianity and Islam" was held in the city's Ismaili Centre, with the participation of representatives of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation. The Islamic University of Tajikistan has conducted two theoretical and practical conferences, four seminars and three meetings on religious topics. A conference on the theme "Building a healthy family" was held in the Islamic Secondary School to mark the Year of the Family. In order to enhance their knowledge, 197 imam khatib and imams from central and local mosques in towns and districts of Khatlon province were invited to attend refresher courses on issues of religion and faith.

95. A legislative analysis has been undertaken to determine whether the 2011 amendments to the Criminal Code comply with the international obligations of Tajikistan in the areas of freedom of assembly and freedom of conscience. Article 160 of the Code provides for criminal liability for violations of the procedures for organizing and/or conducting assemblies, rallies, demonstrations, pickets or street processions by the organizer or by an active participant in such an event if the violation occurs within one year of the imposition of an administrative penalty. This measure is aimed at safeguarding the rights, freedoms and security of the public, which is in line with the international obligations in respect of freedom of assembly and freedom of conscience.

N. Freedom of expression

Recommendations 88.51, 90.38, 90.39, 90.40, 90.41 and 90.42

96. On 19 March 2013, a revised Press and Other Media Act that takes account of international standards was adopted. The Act contains provisions to strengthen media independence and establishes liability for officials who fail to provide information to journalists in a timely fashion or obstruct access to information.

97. The procedure for registering media outlets has been simplified and registration now takes place according to the single window method. As at 1 May 2015, there were 355 newspapers, 225 magazines and 11 news agencies. The newspapers included 27 in Russian, 6 in Uzbek, 14 in Tajik and Uzbek, 83 in Tajik and Russian, 2 in English and Russian, 26 in Tajik, Russian and English, 14 in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek, 3 in Tajik, Russian, English and Farsi, and 2 in Kyrgyz, Tajik and Russian. Of the magazines, 10 appeared in Russian, 4

in Uzbek, 4 in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek, 1 in Tajik and Uzbek, 49 in Tajik and Russian, 37 in Tajik, Russian and English, 1 in Tajik, Russian and Arabic, and 1 in Tajik, Russian, Kyrgyz and English. There were 102 State-owned and 253 independent newspapers, and 100 State-owned and 125 independent magazines. Of the news agencies, 1 was State-owned and the remaining 10 were independent.

98. In 2012, the articles on "defamation" and "insult" were deleted from the Criminal Code, and liability was established for these acts under civil law, in the Civil Code.

99. Under article 23, paragraph 3, of the Press and Other Media Act, government agencies and organizations and their officials are required to provide the media with necessary official information and respond to criticism or analysis within three working days of an enquiry's being made or of the relevant material's being published or broadcast. Urgent information that is of public interest must be handed over by government agencies and organizations and their officials without delay if it is not included in the list of State secrets and other legally protected information and does not require further study.

O. Right to education

Recommendations 88.55, 88.56 and 88.57

100. The National Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Special Needs for 2011-2015 is being implemented. Pursuant to the Policy, a reform of the education system, aimed at ensuring access to education for children with special needs, has begun.

101. The Commissioner for Human Rights has completed a comprehensive analysis of legislation and of the recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on improving the conditions in which education is provided and increasing children's access to education. As part of efforts to guarantee children, particularly orphans, the right to a decent standard of living, 76 residential schools have been set up to ensure that orphaned and homeless children receive an education and enjoy improved living conditions and that educational materials are available to them and to children with special needs. These schools are attended by 11,389 pupils, including 3,008 girls, 1,569 children with disabilities, 171 orphans, 1,453 children with no father and 249 with no mother, and 3,550 children from low-income families.

102. All children in Tajikistan receive general basic education. Within the framework of the State programme for 2010-2013, a range of measures was taken to induce girls to study in educational institutions and to boost their participation, including the introduction of grants and other forms of financial assistance. In addition, outreach efforts aimed at increasing girls' enrolment were improved. To encourage children from low-income families to attend school, the Government adopted on 2 May 2007 and is now implementing a decision on the payment of allowances to low-income families with children in school. Pursuant to this decision, 15 per cent of schoolchildren from low-income families currently receive monetary allowances.

103. To ensure that children with developmental difficulties receive timely, quality assistance with respect to treatment, instruction and education, centres have been established to dispense psychological, medical and pedagogical advice in the following towns and districts: Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tyube, Kulyab, Khujand, Khorog, Pendzhikent, Isfara, Bobojon Gafurov and Istaravshan. With financial support from UNICEF, these centres were furnished with necessary equipment worth more than US $166,688. The specialists working at the centres have received training on rehabilitation and care for children with special needs.

P. Human rights education

Recommendations 88.11, 88.58 and 88.59

104. The Government, on 3 December 2012, approved the new Human Rights Education in Tajikistan Programme for 2013-2020. The Programme is aimed at gradually expanding and enhancing the system of public information, awareness-raising and education in the field of human rights and making qualitative improvements to training in line with the requirements of national legislation and international standards. The Programme covers human rights education in the general education system and training and refresher courses for teachers, judges, civil servants, law enforcement officers and military personnel at all levels. The subject "Human rights" has been included at all levels of the education system. The main themes of human rights education programmes are based on relevant international and national texts and take account of the principles, purposes and goals of the second phase (2010-2014) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

105. To implement the Tajik Programme, an Interdepartmental Coordinating Council was established; the Council, which reports to the Commissioner for Human Rights, consists of heads of training structures in ministries, institutions, higher education establishments and other organizations. In 2013, under the first phrase of the Programme (2013-2014), the Council adopted a decision approving its statute and another approving the action plan to implement the first phase. The Council decided to establish working groups reporting to it and tasked them with developing and presenting targeted programmes addressing the main areas of the Programme and methodological instructions on issues relating to the Programme's implementation, as well as carrying out other activities provided for in the Programme. Pursuant to this decision, six working groups were set up under the Council to cover the Programme's main areas, namely, training for civil servants, training for law enforcement agencies and penal institutions, training for military personnel, training for judges and staff of judicial bodies, training in higher and specialized education establishments, and training in general secondary education establishments. The human rights education programmes presented by the Council and its working groups for staff of various agencies and establishments are now being delivered in some ministries and institutions. The Presidential Institute for Public Administration, in addition to presenting an education programme for 2015, selected several themes connected with the Human Rights Education in Tajikistan Programme and submitted them for approval. To ensure the continuity of human rights education and the realization of the main goals under the Programme, the working groups reporting to the Council presented 17 targeted programmes on human rights education, which were approved and are now being rolled out in certain educational establishments. In December 2014, as required under the Programme, these programmes were transmitted to the Ministry of Education and Science so that they could be delivered in all educational establishments. It is now intended to implement the action plan for the second phase of the Programme.

106. The action plan was presented on 31 March 2015, with the participation of representatives of State agencies, NGOs and international organizations.

VI. Further steps to protect and promote human rights

Recommendations 88.8, 88.70, 90.10, 90.12 and 90.22

107. Respect for human rights is of primordial importance to Tajikistan and is a priority of the country's domestic and foreign policy. Tajikistan is committed to observance of the Charter of the United Nations and other international legal instruments and to a policy of

further developing democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

108. Tajikistan will also continue to work steadily in the future to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms by engaging in equal dialogue with all countries.

109. Tajikistan will systematically fulfil its obligations to report on the progress made in implementing international treaties on human rights, on the basis of the principles of cooperation and mutually respectful and constructive dialogue, and will publish and disseminate concluding observations and look into ways of implementing them.

110. Tajikistan intends to pursue its cooperation with the tools and mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and to extend invitations to special rapporteurs.

111. The process of continuously exchanging views and experience with other countries on the refinement of the country's legislation in the field of human rights will continue, as will cooperation with international organizations and NGOs to strengthen universal human rights standards.

112. Tajikistan will consider the question of accession to and ratification of the international human rights instruments referred to in the recommendations of the Human Rights Council and other international organizations.

113. Tajikistan will take effective measures to fine-tune the activities of the Government Commission on Compliance with International Human Rights Obligations.

114. A range of State programmes and policies on human rights has been adopted in Tajikistan and their implementation remains important to the country.

115. Measures will be taken to expand cooperation with the international community with support from the United Nations country team, in particular OHCHR.